

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING CONNIE KRUEGER

• Mr. JOHNSON. Madam President, Ralph Waldo Emerson once put into words what many know about the art of education, but many of us sometimes fail to realize: "The secret of education is respecting the pupil."

I rise today to recognize an exceptional teacher whom we are fortunate to have in South Dakota, who has never forgotten this maxim. Indeed, she has chosen to live by it. Connie Krueger of Rapid City, SD was recently recognized for her commitment to education and to her students by the South Dakota Council of Teachers of English when she was named the 2003 Language Arts Teacher of the Year. I want to take a moment today to recognize Connie for this highly deserved honor, and to commend her lifelong dedication to learning and young people.

I consider myself especially lucky to have known Connie before she formally became an educator, when we both roamed the halls of Vermillion High School as fellow students. Even as a teenager, it was evident that Connie had a passion for life and learning that was almost contagious. Connie and I were two of the many students influenced by another great teacher, Mrs. Donna Gross. Connie credits Mrs. Gross as being a large part of the reason for her decision to enter the field of education, and I know that Mrs. Gross is very proud of what Connie has done for students and education in South Dakota.

One of Connie's many contributions to education in South Dakota is her participation in, and advocacy for, the Dakota Writing Project. Funded by the National Writing Project, the Dakota Writing Project is a collaborative university and school staff development program to improve the teaching and learning of writing in South Dakota classrooms. Connie has been instrumental in the growth and development of the project, which gives teachers the opportunity to learn from other teachers, while also demonstrating the cross-disciplinary importance of writing. Through her work with the project, Connie not only empowers her colleagues, but also provides educational benefits to all the lives that her colleagues touch.

At the heart of everything that she does is the interest in her students. On her nomination form for the award, Connie wrote that she "will honestly answer any question my students ask, although I reserve the right to not answer if the question makes me uncomfortable. I've yet to use that veto." It is this kind of respect and openness with her students, coupled with her love for the subject matter, that has made her such an exceptional educator.

Her love of education, and of English, is also evident in the professions that her own children, Mike and Heidi, have

chosen. Mike aspires to be a teacher, and Heidi is completing her doctorate in linguistics at the University of Chicago. I know Mike and Heidi are very proud of the prestigious honor bestowed upon their mother, and the hard work and dedication she has shown them over the years.

In a recent article highlighting her award, Connie stated that her goal for this year has been, "Be joyful." Well, thanks to Connie, much joy, knowledge, and inspiration has been shared with students and educators across South Dakota.

I consider myself one of the many lucky South Dakotans whose lives have been touched by Connie, and I thank her for her hard work, her dedication, and for sharing her passion for life and learning with all of us. Our State is truly blessed by her extraordinary talent and commitment to educational excellence.●

MYRTLE BEACH'S CAROLINA FOREST HIGH SCHOOL TO COMPETE IN WE THE PEOPLE COMPETITION

• Mr. HOLLINGS. Madam President, I want to recognize the students of Carolina Forest High School in Myrtle Beach, SC, who will be visiting Washington in late April to compete in the national finals of the "We The People: The Citizen and the Constitution" program. Right now the students are conducting research and preparing for the contest, which will test their knowledge of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights against 1,200 students from across the country. They have earned the trip by showing they were the best of the best in my State, all the more remarkable considering the school graduated its first class just 3 years ago.

Obviously, I hope my fellow South Carolinians win it all, but, whatever happens, we are all winners from this contest. When young people, on their own, want to understand the fundamental principles and values of our democracy, they are more likely to vote. They are more likely to participate in political life. They are more likely to take serious the civic duties that this Nation needs of our citizens. I wish these young South Carolinians the best of luck and thank them for their efforts.●

RECOGNIZING THE STUDENTS FROM WEST WARWICK HIGH SCHOOL

• Mr. REED. Madam President, today I rise in the special recognition of the students of West Warwick Senior High School for representing the State of Rhode Island in the national competition for the "We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution" program. This year's national competition will take place on April 26 to 28, 2003.

The "We the People" program and competition are administered by the

Center for Civic Education. The program is an extensive one, developed to educate students about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The competition is modeled after hearings in Congress and consists of oral presentations by high school students before a panel of adult judges on constitutional topics. The students' testimony is followed by a period of questioning by the judges who probe their depth of understanding and ability to apply their constitutional knowledge.

Our current global situation has increased the importance of initiatives which help young people to understand the fundamental ideals and principles of our government. We cannot take these ideals and principles for granted. Instead, we must hold them as standards in our endeavor to preserve and realize the promise of our constitutional democracy. It is of vital importance for future generations to understand the convictions that bind us together as a nation.

I believe that these students from West Warwick deserve added recognition. Not only is this their second consecutive State championship, this year's State competition took place just 2 weeks after the tragic fire in West Warwick that injured and took the lives of almost 290 family, friends, and neighbors of these young adults. In spite of their hometown's mourning, these students were able to continue their diligent preparation for the statewide "We the People" competition, and win. The West Warwick High School students will be joining 1,200 others from across the United States.

On behalf of all Rhode Islanders, I would like to congratulate the following students: Carly Alvernaz, Linzy Alvernaz, Jennifer Bartley, Stacy Costa, Sara Dalton, Ryan Desrochers, Megan Dougherty, Jillian Drummond, Elizabeth Duggan, Katheryn Flynn, Ashley Iasimone, Thomas Kelly, Paris Legault, Paul Piacitelli, Daniel Politelli, Lisa Powers, Ali Shihadeh, Nicholas St. Germain, Christen Varin, Russell Venditto, and Meaghan Whitford. In addition, I would like to acknowledge their teacher Marc Leblanc, the Rhode Island State coordinator, Michael Trofi, and the district coordinator, Henry Cote, for their dedication to this program over the years. I wish the students from West Warwick High School the best of luck at the "We the People" national finals.●

COMMUNITY HERO

• Mr. SMITH. Madam President, I rise to salute a World War II veteran from my home State of Oregon. Today, I want to recognize the life and contributions of Hazel Ying Lee, a courageous woman who died tragically in the line of duty.

Hazel Ying Lee was born in Portland, OR in 1912. At the tender age of 19, Ms. Lee piloted her first flight. The same year, she earned her commercial pilot's license at a time when fewer than 1